

O B E D I E N C E T O
the Gospell.

T W O S E R-
M O N S, C O N T E I-
N I N G F R U T E F V L M A T T E R,

*both of doctrine, and exhortation: very
needefull to be knowne, and practi-
sed in these our dayes: vpon the words of
the holy ghost, written by the Euan-
gelist S. Luke, chapter 2. verses 15. 16. 17. 18.
19. 20. containing the effect of the birth of
Christ, (revealed by the Angell of God) in the
sheepeherds, and others that heard of it.*

G A T H E R E D O U T O F T H E S E R-
mons of I O H N V D A L L, Preacher of
the worde of God, at Kingston vpon
Thames, and published, at the re-
quest of some of them that heard
them preached.

R O M. 10. 16.

*But they have not all obeyed the Gospell: for Esay
sayth: Lord, who hath beleaved our reports?*



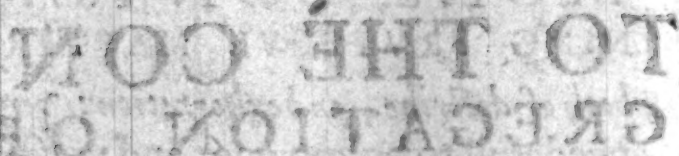
A T L O N D O N

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TO THE CON-
GREGATION OF
CHRISTES PEOPLE, IMBRA-
CING THE TRUTH OF THE GO-
spel, by a lively faith, and obedience to
the same, the ordinarie hearers of the worde of
God, *as Kingston vpon Thames,*

JOHN VDALL *wissheth increase of*
knowledge, faith, reformation of life,
Zeale, & all other vertues of true god-
lines, and holines in this world, and
the rewarde of the same, (tho-
rough the mercie of God in
Iesus Christ) *in the world*
so comd.

SEEING it hath plea-
sed the Lord, of his great
mercie, and goodnes, to
vouchsafe vnto vs that
inestimable treasure of
his holy word: the preciousnes where-

A. 2.

of

The Epistle

of, surmounteth all things vnder the
sunne : wherein he doth offer, euen his
owne selfe vnto vs, and teacheth vs the
way whereby we may come vnto him :
it behoueth vs with all reuerence, and
feare, to imbrace the same, preferring it
before any thing that we can desire vp-
on the earth. And forasmuch as it hath
pleased him, to put that precious trea-
sure in these earthly vessells, subiect vn-
to corruption, and mortality: which by
the natural disposition that they are of,
will strue to infect all the fruite of that
precious treasure, with the stench of
sinnefull and vngodly desires : we are
diligently to watch, and contend, that
we see, that these fleshly and inordinate
motions (that seeke so greatly to extin-
guish euery good thing) may be dayly
more and more kept vnder: that the
word of God may (by the working of
his holy spirit) get the victorie in our
harts, and sit there as a Prince, to rule
the cogitations therof, captiuing them
daily vnto the kingdom of Iesus Christ,
thorough obedience to his most bles-
sed

Dedicatorie.

fed will. The which, forsomuch as it is done, especially, by the ministry of the word, wherein the Lord hath printed such force, that it throweth downe all munitions reared against it: and vnto the worke of the same, hath appointed me among you (of many other most vnable) to do that, which he commaundeth, and my duety requireth at my hands: it standeth both me, and you, in hand, to be most heedefull, that we be not carelesse in these great and weighty matters, which doe concerne the glory of Almighty God, and the eternall saluation, both of our soules and bodies: and so much the rather, because Satan fearing the continuance of the world to be short: and therefore, that which he doeth for the aduancement of his owne kingdome, he must doe it quickly: laboureth by his instruments, with tooth and naile, to extinguish the light of the glorious Gospell, that it should not shine with open face, vnto Gods people: for we see daily, what mischieuous practises he broacheth, what er-

The Epistle

rors he spreadeth, what slanders he inuenteth, what lyes he disperſeth, and all to diſcʒdite the courſe of religion: the truth whereof we doe feele, and ſee in our owne experience: for you knowe, what enimitie the eſtabliſhment of the Goſpell amongſt you had, by your eniuous foes, that would haue kept you ſtill in palpable ignorance, with themſelues: howe many pullbacks and hinderances were deuifed, and be daily inuented, to ſtay the courſe thereof, all which, for ſo much, as (thorough the mercie of God, to vs-ward) they haue not had that ſucceſſe, which the authors hoped for: they labour now, and haue done continually, to imagine ſlaundersous lyes, and moſt wicked forgeries, which they doe daily ſpread abroad, to the ende, to defame the religion, which we profeſſe: ſo that there is not (almoſt) any finne, that can be committed, but it is fathered vpon ſome of vs: which deuilliſh dealing, albeit we know that it ſhall turne to their eternall deſtruction, vnleſſe the Lorde in mercie, giue

Dedicatorie.

gine them grace to repent: yet notwithstanding we may learne a very good lesson out of the same, and make a profitable vse of it vnto our selues: let me therefore intreate you, to marke with diligence this which I shall write vnto you, as you are wont to doe, when I doe speake. The greatest accusation (you knowe) in generall, that your foes, the aduersaries of the Gospell, doe charge you with, is, that you professe one thing, and practise another: that you say well, and doe naughtily: that you reprehend others, you your selues being worse: which (in deede) is a most heinous accusation, and such a thing, as, your owne selues can witnesse, I neuer haue winked at, but most carefully re-
proued, and such a thing as our religion neither teacheth, nor permitteth: for it is of that force, where it entreth, that it will reforme all these things (in measure) in those that haue it within them. This slander goeth yet further: for our profession is accused, to be seditious, contentious, and troublesome

A.4.

vnto

The Epistle.

unto the state, and enemy to good order, and government: & we our selues accounted malicious, proude, finding rather fault with others, than amending our selues, seeking rather for singularity, than loue and charity. You are not ignorant of the sleights of Satan: and therefore knowing, that he was from the beginning, an accuser, and lyar, may the better, by the mercie of God, haue vse of your knowledge, to comfort you in these temptations. But marke, how the Lord maketh Satan, & his imps, to be as spurs and pricks, to driue the godly forward, though they be very grosse, and dull in the beholding of their owne faults: (for Satan casteth a myste ouer their eyes, when they should see them) yet they be very quicke eyed, to pry into the doings of others, especially, the godly, and are able, if our foote doe but slip, to find it out, and haue it as a reason to discredit our profession, which aboue all things, we labour to keepe vnspotted. Therefore it behooueth you, to looke diligently

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gently vnto your selues, to watch your
owne soules, to attend and looke vnto
euery worde that you speake, euery
thought that you thinke, and euery a-
ction that you commit: to examine it
diligently, by the line of Gods word,
which is the touchstone, that wil either
approue it, or disproue it; and if you
find, by the vndoubted warrant there-
of, that it is lawfull, and that you ought
to doe it, then let neither flaunder,
speach of people, deuill, nor hell, staye
you from the practise thereof: but if,
(thorough the remnants of old *Adam*)
you be at any time allured to doe, or
speake any thing, that either is forbid-
den, or hath no warrant from the word
of God, then reason thus with your
selues: this is not agreeable to my pro-
fession: this is contrary to that I haue
learned: this will procure the name of
God to be dishonoured, my religion to
be defamed, and my selfe to be discre-
dited: therefore, though it might be
gainefull, delightfull, or any other way
pleasure me, I may not doe it: this you
had

The Epistle

had neede to marke very well: for (I tell you) you haue many lookers on, that would laugh to see your fall: you dwell in a country, where the Gospell is very litle preached: inso much, that your ignorant neighbours make them selues sport, to mocke at you, that will be so foolish, as to suffer your selues to be seduced by the Scriptures: you haue godlesse and profane men, that doe deride you: Libertines, and freewill men, that doe despise you: worldlings and bellygods, that doe carpe at you: inso much, that you haue very great neede to walke warily: that it standeth you vpon, to behaue your selues circumspectly: therefore doe thus: be diligent in publike hearing, and, (as it may stand with your calling) priuate reading of the worde of God, (for that is the onely schoolemaister, to teach you all truth) vsing daily and hartie prayer vnto God, for the presence of his holy spirite, to teach you the true meaning thereof: looke what you finde therein required of euery Christian, be carefull

to

Dedicatorie.

to doe it: in your dealing with others,
deale faithfully, without facing out of
ill matters: without swearing, or lying:
reproue others with the spirite of mild-
nes, that doe amisse, in your presence:
shewe your selues obedient vnto all au-
thoritie, that is appointed of God: and
that for conscience sake. Bring vp your
children, and seruants, in the feare of
God, instructing them in the principles
of religion: detract no man secretly,
but tell them plainely of their faults: to
conclude, shewe your selues approued
vnto the Lord, in the testimonie of a
good conscience, being alwaies carefull
to seeke the glorie of God, and benefit
of your brethren: be alwaies in worde
and deede, that, which (according to
the Scriptures) ye professe: and then, let
Satan broach his lyes: let the wicked
carry them abroad: let godlesse per-
sons hate you, as long as they may, it
shall turne to their shame at the length,
as (to our great comfort) we see it doth
daily, and (being a triall of your pati-
ence) to your greater glorie in the king-
dome

The Epistle

dome of heauen : and let not the glory of this world bewitch you , for ye are not of this world : let not the successe of godlesse persons dismay you, for the world loueth his owne , and is liberall vnto them : let not the flaunders of the wicked discourage you : for because you runne not on into the same excesse of riot with them, therefore they speake euill of you : let not the multitude of your aduersaries feare you , for God is stronger then all men: let not the threatnings of great ones daunt you , for their heartes are in the handes of the Lord, to be guided at his pleasure : let not the pronenesse of your owne nature seduce you , for he that liueth after the flesh, shall die : let not the crosses that accompanye the Gospell wearie you, for they bring the ioyfull fruite of righteousnesse, to all that are exercised thereby : so shall the name of God be glorified by you : so shall your foes be put to flight, & your profession known to be the truth of the eternall God, that liueth for euer. Now, to come to speake of

Dedicatorie.

of these present sermons, which I haue dedicated chiefly vnto you : partly for that, by that calling which the Lorde hath layd vpon me, I am at this instant, bound, by all lawfull meanes, to doe you good : partly, because it is the earnest sute of some of you, to haue them penned:& partly, for that they contain in them sundrye pointes of religion, which you doe professe, and for which, you are of the world condemned: that euery man may see thereby, the impudencie of Satan, that dare note Gods owne word with the marke of infamie: onely let me craue this at your hands, as a recompence for my trauaile, that you woulde expresse the doctrine in your liues, that I haue expressed, (though simply, yet truly) therein: that I may once see in you all that zeale, which the example of these sheepeherds may teach you: then shal I thinke my labour well bestowed, when the beames of righteousnesse doe breake forth, as the sun at noone day : which, the Lord, for his mercie, graunt, in his
Sonne

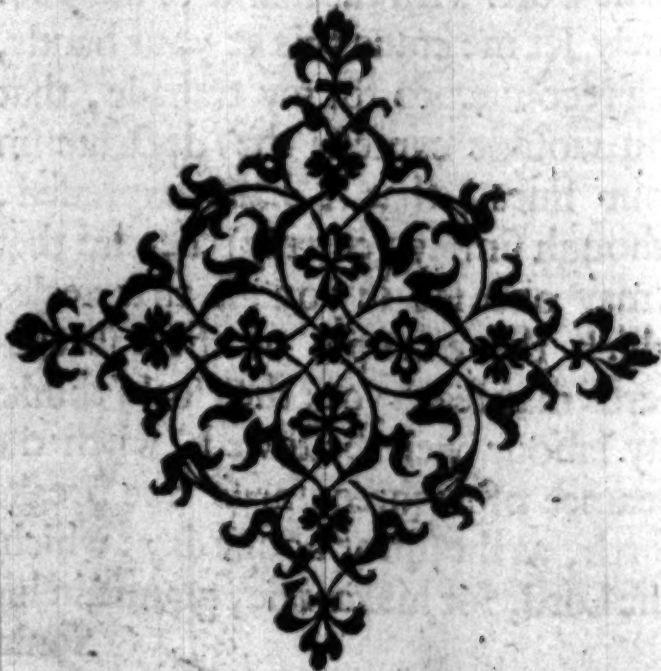
The Epistle

Sonne, our Saniour Iesus Christ: to
whome with the father, and the
holy ghoſt, be all honor
and glorie, both now,
and for euer.

Amen.

Your ſervant, for Ieſus Chriſtes
ſake, his vnworthy meſſenger.

IOHN VDALL.



THE

to

after
ger.

L.

E

THE
OY



The table.

		{ the time when it was. 1.	
		{ their confe- rence,	{ the maner of it. 2.
{ the sheepherds, in whome are to be considered these things:		{ their iorney in going with haste vnto the place where the childe was. 3.	
The birth of Christ, reuealed by the An- gells, did worke ef- fectually, in	{ the people, who wondered at the thinges which they had heard. 7.		{ 1. founde the child. 4.
	{ the fruite of the confe- rence and ior- ney		{ 2. publi- shed it a- broad. 5.
	{ Marye, who	{ kept all these things 8. pondred them in her hart. 9.	{ returned, praying God. 6.



Two sermons, of obedi- ence to the Gospell.

Luke 2. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20.

Verse. 15. **A**ND it came to passe, when
the Angels were gone away
from them, into heauen, that the sheepe-
herds sayd one to another: let vs goe then
vnto Beth-leem, and see this thing that
is come to passe, which the Lord hath shew-
ed vnto vs.

16 So they came with haste, and found both
Marie and Ioseph, and the babe layde in
the cratch.

17 And when they had seene it, they pub-
lished abroad the thing, which was tolde
them of that child.

18 And all that heard it, wondered at the
things, which were told them of the sheepe-
herds.

The first Sermon of

19 But Marie kept all those things, and pondered them in her heart.

20 And the sheepeherds returned, glorifying, and praising God, for all that they had heard and seene, as it was spoken vnto them.



¶ **U**PON the birth of our Lorde, and Saviour Iesus Christ, was made manifest vnto the sheepeherds, that were keeping their shepe by night, it wrought effectually (as you haue heard): first, in the Angels of God, that they were moued to praise and glorie God, saying: glorie to God in the highe heauens, and peace in earth, & towards men good will. Whereby, they both declared, that all praise, hono^r, and glorie was due to God, for the work of Christs incarnation: and also made knowne the blessing of god, y^e was shewed vpon mankind thereby: to wit, that here on earth they should feele themselves at peace in conscience, because of the full perswasion of

Obedience to the Gospell.

of the remission of their sinnes : and also should be tyed together one to another, in a true league of spirituall vnitie : all which, floweth neither from mans will, nor desert, but onely from the free fauour, and good will of God, our heauenlye father. Secondly, it wrought most effectually in mankind, generally so many as were made partakers of the knowledge thereof. Which parties remayne now (together with the doctrine conteined in the hystorie of them) to be considered of : that we may learne out of the same, such doctrine as may serue for our edification & comfort : the place of Scripture, therefore (that we may procede according to our ordinarie manner) offereth the doings of three sorts of people to our consideration. 1. The sheepeherds. 2. The people that heard of it. 3. Marie. In the doings of the sheepeherds, the holy ghost setteth downe their conference, their iorney to the place, where it was told, that Iesus was : and the fruite or euent of their iorney : In the conference, there is set downe the time when it was, and the

The first sermon of

thing it selfe. The maner of their iorney is set downe to be in haste: the fruite or euent that came of it, is threefold: first, that they found Marie, and Ioseph, and the child: secondly, published those things that they had heard: thirdly, (which is in the last verse of all) they returned, glorifying, and praying God. The second sort is the multitude, that wondered at the thing. The third is Marie, y^e kept al these things, and pondered them in her heart. These be the bzaunches of the matter, contained in this text.

And it came to passe, that when, &c.]
The first bzaunch, that is to be considered of, is the time when these sheepeherds conferred: to wit, presently vpon the departure of the Angells: that is, as soon as euer the Angells had made an ende of speaking, and were gone from them, they began to consider with themselves, that the matter was of great importance, and therefore not to be deferred: that it was a thing most necessary, and therefore not to be neglected, but further to be enquired after. Out of which we haue to learne,

Obedience to the Gospel.

learne, for our instruction, two profitable doctrines. First, that we may not linger or prolong the time, in the performance of those things, that God enioyneth vnto vs: we may not deferre the matter vntil hereafter, but presently vpon the hearing of his woꝛde by his ministers, we must obey it: the reason whereof is most apparent: for when God speaketh, then doth he offer the thing, whereof he speaketh. If he threaten his iudgements for sinne, his woꝛd speaking the same, his hand is ready to powꝛe downe the thing: if he teach vs any point of doctrine, for the confirmation of our faith, then is he ready with his spirite, to seale the same in our hearts: if he exhort vs vnto amendment of life, with promise of reward, then doth he mercifully bind himselfe to the performance of the same, so that we may surely settle our faith vpon an vndoubted expectation of it: the which doctrine is notably vrged, in the epistle to the Hebrewes, out of the saying of Dauid: to day, if ye will heare his voice, harden not your hearts. Where

VVe may not
put of from
day to day.

Heb. 3. 7. &c.
Psal. 95. 8.

The first Sermon of

the holy ghost doth tell vs, that whensoever the worde of God is preached vnto vs, enen at that instant doth Almighty God offer his mercie, and maketh this vse of it, that then we should not harden our harts with contempt, or carelesse harkening therevnto, and (to impzint it the deeper in our hearts) the Lord, by the mouth of Salomon, hath vttered this fearefull thzeatning: because I haue called (sayth he) and ye refused, I haue stretched out myne hand, & none woulde regard: but ye haue despised all my counsell, and would none of my cozection, I will also laugh at your destruction, &c. then shall they call vpon me, but I will not answere: they shall seeke me earely, but they shall not finde me, because they hated knowledge, and did not chouse the feare of the Lord: wherevnto that of the Prophet, accordeth: beholde, the dayes come (sayth the Lorde God) that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord, and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north,

Prou. 1. 24.

Amos. 8. 12.

Obedience to the Gospell.

north, euen vnto the east, shal they runne
to and fro, to seeke the word of the Lord,
and shall not finde it. We haue a moste
terrible example of Gods iustice herein,
in that profane person Elau, who despi- Heb. 12. 6.
sing the blessing of god, in the birth right,
sold it away for a portion of meate: of
whome it is sayd, that he found no place
to repentance, though he sought the ble-
sing with teares. We see then, both the
necessitie of present imbracing Gods
word with faith and amendment of life,
and also the terrible threathnings that
God denounceth to pwtze vpon the heads
of the contemners: the which we ought
to apply most diligently vnto our selues:
for if God esteeme so greatly of his word,
and punisheth so sharply the neglect
thereof, we haue great cause to searche
our owne consciences, how faithfull obe-
dience we haue yeldded therevnto: for
we haue heard his word longe, we haue
professed the same, and doe professe it, to
the sight of the world. Nowe, if by triall
we can finde, thorough the testimonie of
gods spirite in our hearts, and examina-
tion

The first Sermon of 10

tion of our lines, that we haue not heard in vaine, but haue increased both in knowledge of the gospell, and also reformation of life, according to the same, our owne consciences may minister vnto vs matter of vnsuited consolation: but contrariwise, if we haue long time bene hearers of the woꝛde, and haue neither profited in knowledge of god, noꝛ obedience to his lawes, surely our estate is most lamentable, howsoeuer we flatter our selues in our owne imagination: and therfoze let vs search our owne consciences, whether we finde that ready mind in our selues, that we see to be in these sheepeherds, to make present profit of gods woꝛd, when we haue heard it.

The second thing, that we haue to marke out of this point, is, that we see the woꝛd of god was effectuell in them, and made them carefull to seeke further, to be informed in the matter of the birth of Christ: that they hauing the whole knowledge of the thing in euery point, might not lacke the vse of it any way, because they did know, that the thing both
being

Obedience to the Gospell.

being straining, and also comming from
God, must needs be most necessary for
them to know. The lesson that is to be
gathered out of the same, for our instruc-
tion, is this: that those who be truly
called vnto the faith in Iesus Christ,
and haue the vnfeined earnest of Gods
spirit within them, doe perswade them-
selues, that Gods word in euery point,
is to be knowne of them, and also euery
way to be practised: which is a doctrine
most needefull to be learned: for Satan
hath so inueigled the hearts of a number,
yea even of them that take themselves to
be gospellers, that they thinke the most
part of Gods worde not to appertaine
vnto them: that the knowledge thereof
is needlesse, the comfort of it fruitlesse,
and the particular obedience therevnto,
more precise, than necessarie: insomuch
that they settle themselves in these, and
such perswasions. I beleue in Iesus
Christ, & hope to be saued by his blood-
shedding: I knowe that Christ died for
my sinnes, and that I ought to liue wel:
as for those points of doctrine, that be so
many,

Euery point of
gods word, is
to be knowne
of euery man.

The first Sermon of

many, they belong to preachers, and men that professe learning, and so forth. In which kind of people you may most lively behold the subtiltie of Satan, that vnder pretence of beleefe in Christ, would ouerthrow the knowledge of God, and perswade them, that he can bring them a nearer way to heauen, than by that ordinary way, which God hath ordeined: but we are to know: that God, whose wisdom shineth in the least of his creatures, hath not set doونه his word to be an idle thing, or belonging vnto a fewe, but vnto al, yea euen to giue vnto the simple wisdom, and sharpenes of wit, and to the childe knowledge, and discretion. And therefore, howsoever they arme themselves against knowledge, and hide their hearts in the dungeon of ignorance, we must make this vse of it: that as God hath appointed his ministers to teach all the councell of God vnto his people: so it is his will, that his seruants should learne it all, to the ende that they may haue vse and consolation of it, in the gouernment of their liues, and
strengthene

Psal. 19. 7.

Prou. 1. 4.

Ephes. 4. 12.

Acts. 20. 27.

Obedience to the Gospel.

Strengthening of their faith. If this were truly learned, it would overthrow that settled persuasion which Satan hath grounded in the heartes of many, whereby they thinke themselves (if they have heard the word for some small time) that they have learned enough; that they have sufficiently profited in religion: and therefore they become colde, and carelesse, not regarding whether they frequent the holy exercises of religion, or no. Which is the cause (at this day) that so heynous enmities reigne in mens lives, to the great dishonour of God, and slander of the Gospell. But let vs persuade our selves, that every poynt of Gods word is of most weightie importance, needefull for vs to be knowne: and that (doe what we can) we shall never knowe, but in part, never go farre enough, neither in knowledge, nor strict obedience, for still we be unprofitable servants: and therefore, that we with all humilitie, and reverence, be most diligent in frequenting those places where we may learne to knowe more and more

I. Cor. 13. 12.

Then we can not be too forward, as some say.

The first Sermon of

more of Gods will, and praye vnto him, that we may become euery day more godly than other, so long as we liue.

They sayd one to another.] The second branch of the first part, which conteyneth the maner of the conference, the meaning wherof is this: that when they did see, both the weightines of the matter, and also the necessitie of the knowledge thereof in themselves, they began one to exhort and stirre vp another, to the earnest & hastye seeking out of the thing. Out of which, there may be gathered diuerse doctrines, for our instruction. First, in that they say one to another, let vs go vp then vnto Bethleem: we may behold the beginning of the performance of that prophesie: where it was sozetold, that in the time of Christ they should say: come, let vs goe vp to the mountaine of y^e Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teache vs his waies, and we will walke in his pathes. Whereby the holy Ghost teacheth vs, that in the time of the Gospell, there should be such zeale, that euery

Isay 2.3.

We ought to
stirre vp one
another to re-
ligion.

Obedience to the Gospell.

every one should excite, and stirre vp his neighbour vnto religion: which prophe-
sie being verified in these shepheards,
both teach vs our dutie: to wit, that if
we acknowledge our selues to be of that
number, whom Christ in his Gospell ru-
leth, then must we practise this point of
obedience to him, and loue to our bre-
thren: that we be meanes to stirre them
vp, to exhort, and further them in the du-
ties of christianitie: wherevnto, in the
doctrine of the Gospell, (which is the sta-
tute law that Christ gouerneth his king-
dome by) we are oftentimes exhorted.
The holy Apostle S. Paule sayth: wher-
fore exhort one another, and edifie one
another, euen as ye doe. And in another
place: exhort one another daily, while it
is called to day. And againe: let vs con-
sider one another, & prouoke vnto loue,
and to good works. The reason whereof
is this: that seeing by the mercifull cal-
ling of God, we are members of one bo-
dy, wherof Iesus Christ is the head, and
linked together by one spirit, the fellowe
feeling of the grieue of others, (if we be
feeling

1 Theſ. 5. 11.

Heb. 3. 13. 19.

The first Sermon of

feeling members in deede) constraineth vs to doe good one to another: and therefore especially to informe those that neede, in the way of righteousness. Thus we see what is our dutie, required of vs by the Lord himselfe, which we are diligently to consider of: for we may not thinke, that the gifts of God bestowed vpon vs, are for our selues alone, but for the benefite also of others. Which, if it were rightly weyed, religion would not be so geason amongst vs as it is: for men thinke now adayes, that if they see others wallow in ignorance, and bring forth the fruites of the same, (most enormous sinnes) in their conuersation, it is not their dutie to instruct them, because (forsooth) it is the office of the preacher: nay, they thinke the minister ought not to doe it neither, vnlesse he be in the pulpit: and therefore his documents are vnlanerie, vnlesse he himselfe be hedged in with a peece of wood on eche side: but howsoeuer they would shut out knowledge, by these and such like speeches: we are to learne, that it is the dutie, not on-
ly

Obedience to the Gospell.

ly of ministers publikely, but also of all men priuately, to instruct those that be ignorant, and to bring them from error: & the partie informed, is not to cauil at the man that doth it, nor the place where it is done: but in reuerence to receiue it, as from the Lorde, and to laye it vp in his heart, for the amendment of his life

Secondly: in that these sheepehers doe (after they haue hearde the message of God, by the Angell) thus conferre of it, howe they may be further edified: we learne that they were careful, that they should not forget the things that they had heard: & therfore they are earnest to goe to y^e place, which the angels had named, for their further satisfaction. An example of fruitful hearers of the word of God, by whom we may learne a very profitable lesson, which is, that when we come to y^e hearing of the word of God, (so much as we are unfit, & (in troth) unable to carry al things away that we heare, partly thorough y^e corruption of our nature (the remnants whereof we shal alwaies carry about with vs) & partly thorough the
subtiltie

The first Sermon of

¶ We must conferre of the word of God, after that we haue heard it.

subtilltie of Satan, wharby he suggesteth other cogitations into our minds, to the ende that he may bereaue vs of the benefite of Gods heavenly word & steale our minds from attending to it. After that the sermon is done, we ought at our coming home, to meete together, & say one to another: come, we haue al bene where we haue heard Gods word taught, let vs confer about it, that we may not onely call to remembzance those things that euerie one of vs haue caried away, but also that one may haue y benefit of the labors of others: & surely it must needes proue a very profitable way: for if one haue missed y obseruation of this or that point, another hath marked it, so that among them they may bring away the whole, and so be edified one by another. And as all are to be careful herein, so especialy it is to be practised by maisters, & fathers of families, that forsomuch as children & seruants be often carelesse, in attending vnto the word of God. the very feare of rebuke or correction, at their faithers or maisters hands, wil make them learne somewhat.

Obedience to the Gospell.

If the benefite of this course were perceived, and the practise of it vled (besides the commodity redounding to the parties) it would be y^e meanes to stay manie horrible offences, that are committed: For what is y^e cause of such idle talk that men haue delight in? Euen the lack of better matter wherein they might be occupied. What is the cause y^e Lords saboths be so ill spent: yea so horribly prophaned? Euen this, that so soone as they come from Church, (if yet they come there at all) they thinke their dutie to God fully performed, and so go in all haste, to dice, cardes, bowling, tipling, and euerie other wicked pastime (as they call them) wherein want neither cursing, swearing, nor blaspheming, to the great dishonour of God, and procuring of his heauie wrath to be powred vpon this land, and the decay of all religion: but marke in this point the height of all iniquitie, in these our daies, whereas Magistrates should redresse these things, and others that take vpon them the correction of vice in the Church, do make a shewe of

The first Sermon of 10

defending religion: if there be anie smal
 number (which is rare) y^e woulde glad-
 lie (following the example of these shep-
 hearde) confer p^{ri}uately of those things
 that they haue hearde, and be carefull to
 growe in the knowledge of religion, by
 and by it shalbe charged to be within the
 compasse of a conuenticle: and their good
 and godly course shalbe checked and bla-
 med by p^{re}tence & colour of law: but if
 twenty meete together in an Alehouse
 (though they most prophanely abuse the
 creatures of God, lewdly mispend their
 time, blasphemously dishonour the Lord,
 and vncharitably reuile, euen the very
 profession of Iesus Christ: all this is no
 harme: it is but good neighbourhod, it is
 no conuenticle, they haue (or will haue)
 no law to punish it: from hence do spring
 all the abominable sinnes that reigne in
 this land: euen that religious exercises
 (by the secret papistes and p^{ro}phane a-
 theistes that be in authoritie and abuse
 the law and meaning thereof) are discour-
 tenanced, & godlesse and irreligious dea-
 lings boallstered, whose reckoning, for
 their

The wicked a-
 use mans lawe,
 to deprave the
 word of God.

Obedience to the Gospell.

their partes, in the day of account, will be most intollerable, which they least think of; but let vs pray vnto God y he would grant vs reformation of these and such thinges when his good will and pleasure is: and in the meane while to grant vs the spirit of wisdome, and discretion, that we may walke warily in these dangerous dayes. Moreover in the consideration of the parties, what kinde of people they were, we may note that which concerneth our instruction. They were (as you see) shepheardes, men of no great calling, and most like of small learning: yet beholde, both howe the Lord doth reueale the birth of his Sonne, first, vnto them, and also how carefull they are, to search out euery circumstance of y same. There is no doubt, but if they had liued in these our dayes, they should haue bene charged with great presumption (that being men of meane vnderstanding) durst meddle with such high matters, whereof the very Rabbines could not agree. But we learne by their example: 1. to admire the wonderfull wisdome, and

C.g.

loue

The first Sermon of

Why God re-
uealeth (oft-
ner) his word
to the simple.
1. Cor. I. 29.

No excuse
must keepe the
simplest from
the knowlege
of Gods word.

loue of God: wisdome that doth thus re-
ueale his Sonne to these simple ones &
not to the great clarkes of the Iewes &
Scribes and Pharisees, his loue; that so
mercifully maketh him self knowne vn-
to these, that in their own eyes (no doubt)
and also in truth, were by reason lesse
capable of so high mysteries: & vnder-
stand of we must acknowlege to be this, which
(also) S. Paul teacheth vs, that the Lord
thereby stoppeth the way for anie man
to reioice or boast in himselfe: but that
he may learne to ascribe all glorie onelie
vnto God: Secondly, we learne, that it is
the dutie euen of the simplest, to seeke the
knowledge of Iesus Christ out of his
word, and to exercise himselfe continual-
ly in the same: and not to say, (as com-
monly is said) I am a Lay man, I haue
no learning: let them that are preachers,
and haue bene brought vp in Scholes
meddle with Scriptures: I must attend
vpon my worldly businesse: by which,
(and such like speeches) they thinke they
haue gotten inuincible shields, to defend
them from knowledg, and shewd them
in

Obedience to the Gospell.

in their ignorance: but they will proue
no better than broken reedes, and figge-
leaves in the daie of iudgement: for God
hath not placed any man in this earth, to
the ende, that he (sleeping in ignorance)
should satte vpon himselfe, with the vse of
Gods blessings here, and seeke no fur-
ther: but that he should aboute al things,
be careful to search out of Gods worde,
how to know his will, that knowing it,
he may obey him, and so earnestly set
forth the glozie of his holie name.

Againe, we see the maner of their pro-
ceedings to be this: that they say, let vs
go then vnto Bethlehem, and see this
thing that is come to passe, which the
Lord hath shewed vnto vs, as if they
should haue said: as we are careful to be
further certified in this matter, so must
we both be wary that we go to the place,
and also search the things that haue been
told vs, least we (doing otherwise) reape
no benefite by our iorney: wherein wee
may behold (for our example) a patterne
of right obedience vnto God: they are
verie forward, and yet notwithstanding
C.ij. tie

The first Sermon of

Where and
how the truth
is to be sought

ty themselves vnto that which they had heard. All men by the verie instinct of nature, are desirous to knowe the trueth, but yet in the manner all naturally doe erre, for they seek it after the course that their owne fancies doe imagin: but they that wil seeke the truth truly, & in truth: they that ever shal come to y^e knowledge of the same, do follow the stricke rule of Gods worde, neither swaruing to the right hand, nor declining to the left: and they be most earnest and diligent in the same. Whereby we may make notable triall of our selues: both whether we be in the way of truth or no, and also how carefull we be to finde it. Which triall if it were duely applied vnto our hearts, y^e greatest number of vs no doubt should find themselves carelesse and so haue iust matter with in themselves either to conuince themselves, & so be excusles, or else to find their owne wickednesse, & so become more diligent and attentine to y^e word of the Lord. Lastly this doth notably declare vnto vs the cause that so fewe do shew forth that care in obeying the

Obedience to the Gospell.

the Lord as they should, even because they make so small reckoning of Gods word perswading themselves that either the knowledge thereof is not needfull at al, or if any whit, yet they goe about it as though they had no stomache to it: but sillie soules, if they did either know the necessitie, or comfort of it, they would not esteeme it so base: the necessity: that it should be our continuall counsell, for the directiō of our affaires: that it should be as a lanterne to our feet & light vnto our paths: that we are naturall in darkness, & it must be the candle to direct vs, or else we cannot chuse but fall into spiritual dangers: & comfort, that among the diuers troubles of this miserable world (the waywardnesse of our owne nature, and the manifold temptations of Satan) it is not possible that we should stand or haue any hope of consolation but only in the promises of God, which be there set downe, whereon the soules of al holy men haue euer fed, and bene stayed: and therefore David who was a king

The cause that
so fewe finde
Christ

Psal. 119. 24.

2 Pet. 1. 19.

Psal. 119. 50. 92.

E. liij.

riches

113 The first Sermon of O

riches; yet sayeth he plainely that
that it was his comforte in his trouble:
and, except the lawe of God had bene his
Delight, he had perished in his afflictions:
and therfore let vs not flatter our selues,
who are manie and infinite waies infe-
riour, and more vnable to stand, than he
was: but let vs continually craue at
Gods handes, that wee may be daile
more and more rauished with the loue of
his word, and may haue the right vse of
it, and then we shall see, that of al things
in this worlde it is the thing that we
should most desire.

so they came in haste The second ge-
nerall branch of the effect is this, that
when they had one stirred vp another,
and being earnest in enquiring out the
matier, and also knowing by the directi-
on of the Angel, both the place where to
they should go, & also the thing where
of they would be certified, do now, in all
haste, without anie further delay, go to
the place to see the thing, wherein we
may beholde the true worke of Gods
word, that it not onelie instructeth them
to

Obedience to the Gospell.

to conferre and talke of the thing, but also to do it indeed. The maiestie of Gods word (as we shall see hereafter) getteth an assent vnto it (almost) of all men: insomuch, that all nowadaies are contented to professe wel, and to make a shew: they are willing to crye, Lord, Lord, and carrie the countenance of Gospellers, but to bring forth the fruit of it in their conuersation, this is the thing that they straine cortesse at: but we are to learne (by the example of these shepherds,) that if we will be indeed, that which we would be accounted to be, then must we be as careful to practise Gods commandments in our life, as to speake of them in our mouths: for religion standeth not in profession onelie: the seruice of God standeth not in wordes alone: he is not straightway a Christian, that carrieth the countenance of one: but he onelie who is careful both of profession, and also true obedience. For as it is most true, that without professing of the Gospel we can not be the members of Christs Church here vpon earth: so is it as true, that

C. v.

with

We must not
onely professe
Gods word,
but do it also

The first Sermon of 50

Rom. 8. 9. 10.
Galat. 5. 22.

without the fruit of that which we make
shew of, we cannot perswade our selues
to be (neither in dede are we) the ser-
uants of God. For whom God teacheth
by his word, he indoweth with his spirit
where the spirit of God is, there be the
frutes of the spirit: and the body is dead
because of sinne, but the spirit is life for
righteousnesse sake. Let every one of vs
(therefore) lay this vnto our owne con-
sciences, and labour to make profit of it
vnto our selues.

Againe we see in these shepheardes,
that as they make the motion one to a-
nother, that they may goe, so they leave
not there, and so let it rest, but they goe
forward also, a notable example for our
instruction. When men that haue more
ciuill honestie and moderation of them-
selues then the common sort haue, doe
meeke together often, they haue by whole
common wealthes in their talke: euer
saying, this is not wel, and that mighte
be amended: it were wel if such a thing
were so: but you shal neuer heare more:
they content themselves with (it should
be

It should be so
is not sufficient

Obedience to the Gospel.

be) & neuer put to their hands to further it: euen like to them, that being repro- ued for swearing, saie: indeede I am to blame, and I confesse it is a fault: or being exhorted to this or that godly course, answere: indeede it should be so: hearing a minister teach any pointe of religion, say: he said very well, he is a very good man: I would we could followe him: but neuer strine to amend: neuer labour, nor indenuour to doe so: but couer all vnder this cloke, flesh is fraile, we are all sinners, and so thinke that to be excuse sufficient to kepe themselves still in the state they be, or else worse and worse: Euen so deale these men; they moue or approue any good motion, and neuer strive to stirre by others, that it may be practised, and these people be commonly such, as either beare offices, or are some way assistantes, in corporati- ons, where they be gouerned by the consultation of man: and therefore you her present may haue good vse of this doctrine when you haue anie publique matters in hand: especially when you do meete to-
gether

The first Sermon of 10

gither, for the election of your Magistrates, I am sure you will all saie and wish in generall termes, that a sufficient man may haue this and that office: but surely it falleth out, that euery man almost is led by his private affection, in the particular wishing either the preferment and benefite of him selfe, or his friend, neuer regarding how able hee is to discharge it. And hence it is that (as Salomon saith) we may see a great euill vnder the sunne, as an error that proceedeth from the face of him that ruleth: follie is set in great excellencie, and the rich (in al manner of wisdom) set in the law place. I haue seene seruants on horses, and Princes walking as seruants on the ground: wherebpon foloweth all disorder, because the gouernours either can not, or dare not, or wil not execute their office aright.

Ecclesiast. 10.5

We may moreover see in these shepherds a note of great zeale, that their mindes being rauished with desire of the thing, they went in haste: strining (as it were) to go one before an other: and they

Obedience to the Gospell.

they had great reason for it : for being taught that the sonne of God, the saviour of mankind, their redeemer, was to be sene in Bethlehem: who can blame them, if they ran one ouer an other for hast? Which teacheth vs what we are to do in matters of religion . For so much as in the worde of God, we seeke the same Christ, yea, farre more glorious than he was, when they sought him: we are to contend with all possible indeno, that we may euē go befoze our teachers, that (as Dauid did) we may excel them, in wisdom, zeale, vnderstanding, and godlines: But do we so? Alas, no, we are maruellous manerly herein: we giue place to euerie one to go befoze vs, and we would be so fine (after the fleshly maner) that we looke at men, and follow them: and though we see manie goe for ward befoze vs, if anie in whom wee haue anie confidence, procede not, wee tarrie also: and this is our excuse, loe (say we) is not such a mā wise, and learned: is not he of great account with the best: trowe you if it were the right way

Psal. 119. 98.
VVe straine
courtesie, who
should first be
religious, but
who should
first gaine ri-
ches.

The first Sermon of

Math 7.2.4.11.
19.16.24.

way to heauen that he would so little regard it : I know him to haue more skill then I , and therefore looke how he doeth so will I doe: for he is an. honest substantiall man . And thus we build vpon men, forgetting the rocke Iesus Christ, vpon whom we should settle our ground, and of whome we must learne both knowledge , and example of life: but in our worldly matters (which should be meanes to induce vs to the consideration of heauenly thinges) we doe not so, for if we heare of a benefite, or preferment, or any other thing whereby we may gaine : we say not , he is a man more worthy to haue it then I, he hath more neede of it then I : but we strue by all meanes to preuent our neighbor: then happie is he (thinke we) that can rise earliest, and can spurre his horse to runne the fastest: then is our mannerliness that we vse in Gods matters cleane forgotten : the greedy desire of gaine hath so raniished our heartes, that we cleane forget, nay that we are carelesse, whom it is that we goe before, father or mother

Obedience to the Gospell.

ther, friend or foe. Whereby we doe
euen condemne our selues to be mere
wozdlinges, wholly addicted to the
mucke of this woꝛlde, not caring what
become of all our dearest friendes, yea of
our owne soules after this life, so that
we may haue present gaine. And that we
were thus minded towards heauenly
things: that we had such a care to get
vnto vs true wisdom, vertue and holie-
nesse. And that we were as vigilant to in-
crease in knowledge, faith and righte-
ousnes: as we be in dignitie, welth, and
woꝛldly pleasure. And that we could con-
sider the excellencie of the soule aboue
the body: and thereby compare the or-
namentes of the one with the other, and
the necessitie of the one beyond the other:
then (doubtlesse) would our righteousness
burst forth as the starres, and our holie-
nesse as the sun at mid. daie: then should
not we poore preachers of Gods woꝛde,
crie out so much as we do, for religion
and refoꝛmation, with so small profite:
then should not Christ be turned behind
vs, and our owne denises be preferred:

the 11

The first Sermon of

then should not the counsel of God giue place to the decrees of men, nor follie beare the sway, and wisdom be despised as it is euerie where, to the great dishonour of our most louing and bountifull God, and grieve of the consciences of all that feare his holie name.

And found) Now foloweth the fruit of this trauaile of the shepherds, in three points (as you heard in the beginning) first, they found that they sought for: secondly, published it abroad: and thirdly, glorified God for it.

And found both Marie, and Ioseph, and the babe laid in the cratch) The first fruit which is this: that according to their expectation and earnest desire, they using the meanes, and taking the course that was intoynd vnto them, obtaine their desire, & find Christ, as it was told them: wherein we may behold generally the truth of the word of God that euer cometh to passe according as it is foretold: to teach vs to repose vnfained confidence in it. And particularly we may see that verified in this place, that our Saviour

The truth of
Gods worde.

Obedience to the Gospel.

Our Chriſt promiſed, ſaying: aſke, and it ſhalbe giuen you: ſeek, and ye ſhal find: Mat. 7.7
knocke, and it ſhalbe opened vnto you: whoſoever aſketh receyueſh, and he that ſeeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it ſhalbe opened: God is not like vnto woꝛldly men, that are very li-
berall in promiſes, and ſparing in per-
formance, but what ſoever he promiſeth,
he vſe thoſe meanes that he preſcri-
beth, for the obtaining of it, he perſo-
meth it, yea and that not niggardly: ſo
that, if at any time thou beeft not parta-
ker of thoſe thinges in particular: which
God hath generally promiſed vnto his,
ſure thy ſelfe, that the cauſe is only in
thee, and no part in him: for the moſt
obediente that ever were, coulde neuer
excuſe God of this, to be ſhort in
the performance of his woꝛd. And
therefore let vs make this vſe of it, vnto
our ſelues: y ſeeing he is ſo free in woꝛd,
and ſo bountifull in deed, let vs caſt all
our care vpon him, let vs cleave, with-
out doubting, vnto his mercy, and take
that courſe of life that he iniogneſh, vſing

D.,

all

The first Sermon of

Rom. 12. 2.

Why men do
seeke, and find
not.

James 4. 3.

To dispise the
meanes in tru-
sting of God,
is to tempte
him

all the lawfull meanes that he hath sanc-
tified in his word, & then shall we proue
what is the good will of God, acceptable
and perfect: then shall we to the greater
comfort of our soules, seele that it is no
vaine thing to serue God: that we haue
not washed our handes in innocency for
naught. But here we are to be very wa-
ry, that we tempt not God, and so accuse
him of breach of promise. For in truth
there be many that seeke and finde not:
that aske and haue not: that beg and ob-
taine not: that would enter in, and can-
not. Whereof S. Iames giueth the rea-
son: for that (saith he) they aske amis, that
they might consume it vpon their owne
lustes: which wee doe see moste euident
in our owne experience: for every man
wisheth, that he were perswaded of the
loue of God towards him, that he could
serue God, as he commandeth, and
might come to the kingdome of heauen,
and yet the most part neuer the nearer.
For either they dispise and contemne
meanes that should bring them to the
thing that they desire, (as he that doth
wilde he were religious, condemneth
the

Obedience to the Gospell.

word preached: he that would be holy, refuseth to strive against the lusts of his owne flesh; he that would be rich, refuseth the paines to travaile for the same, or else he doth it so distrustingly, that he reposes not his confidence in God, which he should. The world is full of both these sortes of people: the former are espied folishe, even by naturall reason, the latter seeme to have greater colour: for (thinke they) I coulde be verie well contented to be religious, and so intoye the reward of the same. But what is now in this world? I see yet what is there, I cannot tell, I will not therefore be so foolish, as utterly to renounce these present pleasures so farre, as to denie my selfe wholly: but this I will doe, I will take vpon me the profession of Iesus Christ, and give him some intertainement in my heart, but not wholly: I will not trust him too farre, but take him in the one hand, and the world in the other, that if at any time, I be troubled for the one, I may cleave with honesty to the other, and say I neuer meant any lesse. Thus doe

The first Sermon of

a number in these dayes (as their dares doe most evidently declare) but what get they by it? Surely , the Lord in his iust iudgement , doth so bziidle them because they would not trust him wholly to be their gouernour, that they doe neuer feele the sweetnesse of Religion , in so much that in time of persecution they vanish away, and in the dayes of trouble they knowe not which way to turne , because they would gladly retaine Christ, and yet feeling no comfort by his worde dare not cleaue wholly vnto him . But let vs beware of parting stakes betwene God and the wo:ld: let vs not come limping vnto the Lord, but with our whole wils, hearts and minds, haue affiance in him : that by his mercy we may reape the benefit of Iesus Christs obedience, for our full contentment in this wo:ld, and glorification in the wo:ld to come.

And whē they had seen it, they published abroad that which was tolde them of the Childe.) Nowe followeth the second fruit of their trauaile : to wit, that they seeing the truth of God in his promise, and perceiving

Obedience to the Gospell.

ceiving that God had some greater work
to doe in him, they dispersed it abroade,
and told it to others, as they could get
convenient occasion: so that this being
the meaning of the wordes, let vs ob-
serue those things that are to be learned
out of the same, for our instruction: & first
let vs consider the time whē they pub-
lished it, even when they did see and per-
ceive plainly, that it was so indeed, as
they were told of the Angell, so that
there could be no deniall of it any way.
Which teacheth vs this lesson: that reli-
gio must first be known befoze it be vt-
tered: for how can a man reueale a thing
vnto an other, whereof he is still igno-
rant himselfe? How can a blind man see
to directe an other in the way: and ther-
fore the first thing that is required at our
handes, in the service of God, is that we
seeke thoroughly to knowe his will, to
the end that we may haue a most certain
ground, both how to directe our owne
wayes, and also to make our lightes
shine to others, which al men do desire to
do, or at least to be so accounted: but be-

Knowledge is
the first pointe
of gods service

The first Sermon of

Hypocrites ne-
ther be loued
of God or man

cause they haue not that care to be di-
rected by certaine knowledge, both their
own wayes that seeme good in their own
eyes (yea though they be wo:kes in
themselves good) are odious in the sight
of God, as being fruits that procede not
from faith, and also their profession of
outward shewe, is espied faultie even
in the world, and they accounted hypo-
crites: so that if we enter duely into the
cōsideration of the estate of such persons,
we shall see it to be of all others most de-
perate: for in the sight of God, their do-
ings are abhominable, insomuch as
they haue not learned by the knowledge
of his word to do them in faith, and in
the iudgement of men, they are also re-
jected: for both the goodly (to whom the
Lord hath given the spirit of discretion
to discern those thinges that differre) do
see their course to be only in outward ap-
pearance, and therefore ioyne not with
them: and also the wicked who cannot
discerne otherwise then by the fruites,
do see that they make a shewe of one
thing, and practise an other: and there

Obedience to the Gospell.

foze doe euen of all other detest them
most, so that they being neither beloued
of God, noz man, must needes (of all o-
ther) be in the worst case. Therefore
they that intend to take a right cause,
wherewith they may both please God,
& bring comfort vnto their owne soules,
and also stoppe the mouthes of their ad-
uersaries, as they be desirous to doe
those thinges that may be approued be-
foze men, so let them first beginne with
this that they may learne of the worde
how they may haue warrant from him,
and be sure that they doe his will, and
not to take vpon them for any priuate
occasion (either of gaine, credit, or plea-
sing others) to make shewe of that,
which neither they know, noz yet haue
any feeling of: so shall they in any extre-
mitie haue the testimony of a good con-
science, the comfort whereof overcom-
meth all those euils that the godly are
continually (thorough the malice of Sa-
tan) haunted withall.

Moreover, as wee see that these shep-
heards beginne with knowledge, and

D. iiii.

were

The first sermon of

were first instructed thoroughly in the thing themselves: so we see, that as soon as they had sure intelligence of the matter, they published it, and made it known to others: wherein they make known, both their thankfull heartes to God, and also their louing affections to their brethren: their thankfull heartes, that hauing recieued such a benefit from the hand of God, thinke it their duety to make known vnto others, what a bountifull God he is: Their louing affections to their brethren, that are desirous to haue them partakers of those notable benefits of God, in the birth of his Sonne Iesus Christ: whereby we may learne a most notable point of our duety, that our thankfulness to God, and loue to our brethren must moue vs, by all lawfull meanes, to make that known vnto others which we our selues doe learne out of Gods worde, the summe whereof standeth in these two pointes: to reprove our brethren offending, and to instruct them when we see them ignorant. The carnall man that would not be reprovied, because

Profession of religion standeth in reproofing and instruction.

Obedience to the Gospell.

because he will not amende, nor be instructed, so that he despiseth knowledge, will say, that a minister must doe so, but private persons are not to meddle in any such matter: against whom if I shoulde aledge no more but only the doings of these shepheardes, he were thoroughly answered: but to make it more cleare by the Scriptures, for reprovving sinne, which is the first point: The Lord sayth thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, but thou shalt plainly rebuke thy neighbour, and suffer him not to sin. Whereby we do most evidently see, both that we ought to reprove one another offending, and also that if we doe it not we hate him: and so instructing, the second point, David saith, restore to me (O Lord) the ioy of thy salvation, and stablish me with thy free spirit, then shall I teach thy wayes unto the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee. So that it appeareth plainly hereby what is the duty of every Christian, which (indeede) causeth them that have a care to keepe Gods commandementes, to take this

Leuit 19.17.

Psal. 51. 12, 13.

The first Sermon of

The world cā-
not away with
private rebu-
king and in-
struction.

Iohn. 12. 5.

Acts. 3. 12.

this course wherewithall the godlesse are
moste of all offended, and are readye
to offer them any violent iniury, char-
ging them to doe it not of care ouer Gods
gloze, nor loue to them, but either to
shew themselves busie, in carping with
others, or else of an arrogant bzaunery, for
praise to be accounted religious persons,
whose accusation though it may fall out
to be true in some, (for we haue exam-
ples of both in the Scriptures: Iudas
was a busie body, carping at the deede of
Marie, for spending the precious ointment
vpon Christ, that might haue bene sold,
and giuen to the poore: and Simon Magus
was an arrogant person, who desired
the gifts of the holy ghost, for vaine gloze
sake, rather then to doe good with them:
Yet it is no excuse for them: for though
a man reprove me of malice, mistrust
me of vaine gloze, yet that is only to him
and not to me. I must respecte the thing
which is for my owne benefite, and not
the intent of the party which he shall an-
swere for. Wherefore seeing the world
cannot abide this, and yet thou seest it
injoynd

Obedience to the Gospell.

intoynd unto thee from the Lord: be carefull that in thy owne conscience thou be not guiltie of any sinister minde in doing it, and then let them scorne neuer so much, thou standest vp, on a sure foundation, and discharge thy duty, so that his blood shall be vpon his owne heade.

With what
mind we must
reprove others

It is said here of them, that they published abroad the thing which was tolde them of that child: that is, all that they had heard, & no more shewing their faithfulness for our instruction: that as God hath given his word, so would he haue it al published & made known, as he hath perfected it himselte, so is it his wil, that we should neither adde to it, nor detract from it, but leaue it as we find it: a lesson that is very needefull to be learned: For the world doth commit high treason against God in this point, on both sides: some doe esteeme certaine pointes of doctrine, too high mysteries, and therefore would not haue them medled withall, but buried in silence: as namely the doctrine of Gods eternall predestination: the

The vngodly
either detracted
from, or ad to
the worde of
God.

The first Sermon of

the very staffe & vndoubted stay of our hope in Iesus Christ: which is mosse largely handeled in many places of the Scriptures at large, and euen (as it were) discoursed vpon of purpose. Especially by the holy apostle S. Paule in two seuerall places: the which, whosoever would haue vnknownen, doth accuse God, either of lacke of discretion, to set y^e downe in his revealed word that is not to be taught, or of folly to trouble himselfe in reuealing it, and man in seeking to know a needlesse thing. Others (not hauing the right vse of Gods word) doe in some thinges thinke it insufficient, and therefore they must adde (sozwoth) some deuise of their owne bzaîne, whereby the Scriptures might be made perfect, and these do accuse the Lord of great carelesnesse ouer his Church, that would giue them such an vnperfect lawe, whereby all and euery cause and person in his Church cannot be directed: and therefore letting them both goe, let vs imbrace all Gods worde, and nothing else: let vs publish that all, and nothing but it, by the example

Rom. 9. 11. to 24.

Ephe. 1. 45.

They that doe not knowe the vse of Gods word thinke it vnperfect

Obedience to the Gospell.

example of these shepherdes.

We may yet farther behold in them the victorie of the spirit against the flesh, there were diuerse reasons to induce the not to beleue it: as the basenesse of his birth, the simplicitie of his mother, and contemptiblenesse of his kindred (for the stocke of David in those dayes was most hated by the heathen kinges, and gouernours): There were also reasons to moue them (though they did beleue it, yet not to publish it, as, that Herod would be his enimie, because he should be king of the Iewes, and so they clapte in prison for spreading it abroade: that the Phareseis and Scribes would be grieved with it, because they looked for a Messias comming in worldly pompe: & so would excommunicate these poore shepherdes, if they confessed this child to be Christ: so that they might feare both the gouernours of the church, and also of the comon wealth to be against them: which must needs bring vnto them great trouble: and as for Christ, he was but a child, and his kindred being poore, and therefore

The bataile of the flesh and the spirit in the entrance to religion.

The first Sermon of

therfore his partie weakke, they coulde
haue no rescue at his handes from their
violence: but none of these considerati-
ons troubled them so, as to feare them
from publishing it: why? because they
were fully perswaded, that the saluation
both of their soules and bodies, rested on-
ly in that child, and therfore it was
their duty to vse al meanes, that the glo-
ry of God might be aduanced for it, by
whose example we may learne a molte
necessary lesson. Many thereby, that
take vpon them the profession of Christ,
who, notwithstanding by the considera-
tion either of his base estate, or for feare
of worldly losse or tribulation for his sake,
or by one temptation or other, are dyuen
backe from that sincere course that once
they did practise: whose doinges are
cleane contrary to the doinges of these
sheepehearde: this then is the lesson for
vs, where the feare of God taketh roote, &
religion is once truly sealed in the heart,
by Gods holy spirit: the seale of his glozy
of God doth so possesse that man, that al
worldly considerations cease, that agree
not

The spirit e-
uer getteth
victorie in the
faithfull at
length.

Obedience to the Gospel,

not with it: al allurements are lothsome,
that draw him from it: and all afflictions
are swete, that come to him with it: this
is a most necessary meditation in these
our dayes, wherein men are so generally
carried away with the pleasures, de-
lights, and riches of this present world,
that there seemeth to be euē such a revolt,
as was in the time of our sauiour Christ, Iohn. 6.66.
when many of his disciples went backe-
ward, insomuch that Christ may say to
a very small number, that serue him
truly, now will you goe too? whose stay
and comfort is that heauenly answere
of Peter, to whom should we goe? Seeing
Christ hath the wordes of eternall life,
whome we beleue and knowe to come
from God, and to haue all the treasures
of knowledge and wisdom hidden Col. 3.

in him. The Lord open our
eyes that we may see his
waies, & truly walke
in the same.

Let vs pray.

THE



THE SECOND SERMON OF
OBEDIENCE TO THE
Gospell.

Luke. 2. verse. 18.

*And all that heard it, wondered at the
things that were told them of the sheep-
heardest.*



DW E followeth the
second sort of people wher
in this thing was effectu-
all (for the third thing
is to be considered in the
shepheardest because the

holy ghost hath set it last in the text, I
will also referre it vnto the latter ende)
for it is said when they heard of the shep-
heardest both the thing that was come to
passe and also the mean parties by whō:
they wondered, for euery point of religi-
on is straunge to naturall men, where-

C.j.

in

The second Sermon of

Esay. 55. 10.

2 Cor. 14. 15. 16

in we may see y^e wonderful force of gods
woꝝd which carrieth with it such a ma-
iestye, that it beeing sincerely deliuered,
shaketh the heartes even of all estates of
men. Which we may also learne of the
Loꝝd himselſe, by the mouth of the holie
Prophet ſaiyng. Surely as the raine
commeth downe and the ſnow from hea-
uen, & returneth not thether, but watreth
the earth and makes it to bring forth and
to bud, that it may giue ſeed to the ſowe-
er and bread vnto him that eateth: ſo ſhal
my woꝝd be that goeth out of my mouth:
it ſhall not returne vnto me void, but it
ſhal accompliſh that which I will and it
ſhal proſper in y^e thing whereto I ſend it.
Now to what end and ſoꝝ what purpoſe
the woꝝd of God is ſent that we may
knowe how it woꝝketh S. Paule doth
notably ſet downe. God ſaith he maketh
maniſeſt the ſauour of his knowledge
by vs, in euery place. For we are vnto
God the ſweete ſauoꝝ of Chriſt in them
that are ſaued, and in them which pe-
riſh. to the one we are the ſauoꝝ of death
vnto death: and to the other the ſauoꝝ

Obedience to the Gospell.

of life vnto life. So that we may see here
that the word of God is euer more effect-
full but not to all in any manner: for
some it hardeneth through their owne
peruerfines, others it molifieth and ma-
keth them more obedient vnto God and
surely this is a doctrine wherewithall
we haue great neede to examine our
selues. We haue heard the word along
time and it is plaine that it all wayes
worketh one way or other: so that eue-
ry one of vs may thus reason with our
selues: Hath the Gospell bene profita-
ble vnto me? then haue I encreased in
knowledge, growne stronger in faith,
and holier in life, by the hearing of the
same, if I can finde these fruits of the
word in me, truly, then haue I (to the
comfozt of my owne soule) a testimonie
within me, that Gods word is vnto me,
the sauour of life vnto life: but contra-
rwise, am I as ignorant as I was? as
faithlesse as I was? and sinnefull as I
was: Surely I am in a wofull taking,
for (though I feele it not) my heart is
hardened euerie daie, and I (the longer

Gods word
worketh in all
that heare it
preached.

How a man
shal know whe-
ther the gos-
pel do him a-
ny good or no.

The markes of
fruitlesse hea-
rers.

The second Sermon of

Howe God
Hee will shew
that hee
preached

Hearers for
fashions sake.

Hearers that
are moued
for the time
present onelie.

I liue) am still further from G O D.
This is a fearefull thing (if it were
rightly weyed) not onelie to them that
be professed foes to the worde that they
heare (whome all men accompt to be
in desperate estate) but also; to them
that otherwise are taken and doe take
them selues for ciuill honest men, that
for orders sake will present them selues
in the place where the worde of God is
preached, and thinke thereby that the
Preacher is beholden vnto them, that
they wil vouchsafe to giue countenance
to him with their presence: but neuer
care nor regarde what is spoken, nei-
ther reape anie benefite by it: such may
assure them selues (for most sure it is)
that they doe depart worse than they
came, because the worde that they haue
heard must needs haue his worke, and
returneth not to God in vaine.

These people that thus wondered at
the thing, are yet further to be confounded,
to wit, that for all their wondering, we
reade not, that euer they set the one foot
before the other, to go to the place where
Christ

Obedience to the Gospel.

Christ was, that they might see him: which argueth, that they did not marvel in respect of the benefite that redounded to mankinde by Christ, but onelie, because of the strangenesse of the thing, and that for the time present. The world now adaies is full of people that be right of the same disposition, so let them come to the Church where they heare Gods word preached, you shall see them presently so attentive as though they would catch the doctrine before it be uttered: seeming so to depend upon the mouth of the minister, that they thirst for the doctrine before it come, and also departing from thence, you shall heare them with one consent & general applause admire & know ledge, zeale, boldnes & gifts of the man: commending it highly to be as good a sermon as ever they heard: but ask them what it was, they cannot tell, it is but as the flash of a lightning unto them, quickly banished from their understanding: yea looke into their lives howe they profit by that doctrine for their amendment: they be even as they were before. neuer

The second Sermon of

Willing hearing without fruit, argueth a guiltie conscience,

benefited by it, whereby they do notably condemne themselves: For, in hearing to it so diligently, they consent that it should be heard: in commending it so highly, they confesse it should be obeyed, and yet in that they neyther are instructed nor reformed by it, they shew themselves to walke contrarie to that which their consciences do approve: and so they neede no other Judge but their owne hearts, nor witnesse against them, but their owne consciences, therefore, (if wee desire not to be of this number) let vs growe in knowledge and reformation by the word, and then doe we heare and professe the Gospel aright, let vs not saie, he said well, and neuer care to remember his sayings: let vs not say, we should do thus, or (as the manner is) he touched such and such persons notably to daie: but let vs applie it vnto our selues, and reape fruit from it for our owne amendement, which all must doe that will be right hearers of Gods word.

But Marie kept all those things and pondered

Obedience to the Gospell.

dered them in her heart.] This is the third parte, wherein the birth of Christ reuealed by the Angell is effectually, shee was the mother of the childe, and did knowe that hee was wonderfully conueined, and therefore was perswaded, that God had a marueilous worke to do by him: And seeing first the Angell comming to her, and then the sheepeheards, was further induced to mize of the matter, and therefore she did as is here expessed: First, she kept them, secondly, she pondred them in her heart.

Kept all those things) The first: the originall word is, that she kept them all together as it were in one bundle, both the Angels speech and the sheepeheards comming to hir, and euery other circumstance in the maner of her sons incarnation and birth, wherein she sheweth her selfe obedient euerie way vnto the word of God, so often as she heard it: for the Angell Gabziel had told her this matter befoze hand, and now she hearing the same from the sheepeherds, laieeth it then also vp in her hart. If she had been of the

The second Sermon of

The sayings of
the wicked
when they
heare one do-
ctrine twice.

minde that manie be in these our daies,
and yet take them selues to be good
Christians, Wee woulde haue saide
vnto the sheepehearde: Why do I heare
this from you? I haue bene tolde it be-
fore by an Angell from heauen. Why
then shoulde I giue eare vnto it a-
gaine especially being spoken by you,
that be but inferiour persons, of no
reputation? So saie manie among vs,
if they heare one doctrine twice, they
thinke it not worthe the hearing a-
gaine, because they thinke they lear-
ned ynough at the first: but if it be the
second time by a meaner Minister than
at the first, they abhorre it so much
the more, saying: I heard this hand-
led by a learned man than hee is,
by Maister Doctor, by Maister Arch-
deacon, &c. I am sure he can saye no
more in it (nor so much) as hee did,
therefore I will be gone. But Ma-
rie was not of this minde: for she
considered, that the sheepehearde could
not come to the knowledge of the thing,
without the will of God: and that the
Lord

Obedience to the Gospell.

Lord who guideth all things, had directed them to come thither, and therefore it was mete for her to harken diligently, and marke euery word verie attentively. Which vse also we must make of the like: for if a Sparrowe fall not vpon the ground without our fathers will: then can not we, neither shal we heare anye part of his heauenlie word, without his appointment. Therefore I must make this vse (rather) of it, reasoning with my selfe thus: I thinke that I know this point that is now in hand, ling well ynough: but yet I am deceived, for God woulde not then haue it spoken to me againe, therefore I am now to heare it as diligently and marke it as carefully, as though I had neuer knowne erst what it meant: and on the other side, the partie, who hath heretofore refused to obey such or such a doctrine, and heareth it sounding in his eares againe, may reason thus with himselfe, why doth God offer it vnto me, knowing, that heretofore I haue despised it? Surely because hee hath a loue

Math. 12. 29.

What the
godlie thinke
whē they heare
that which
they did heare
before.

vn.

The Second Sermon of

What the wicked should thinke when they heare that doctrine which they haue despised before.

unto me, and would haue me repent, and not be condemned: Beholde the great loue and mercie of God unto me vile, and wretched sinner: therfore now will I goe unto him, and saie, Father I haue sinned against heauen and in thy sight, and am not worthe to be called thy seruant: I haue done wickedly, in contemning so often thy holie woꝛde, in casting it behinde me despitefully: and now Lord, for thy mercies sake be fauorable unto me, and receiue me unto thy mercie. Happie is that man that can make this vse of Gods woꝛd: but if they doe not, they may take it thus (for it is vndoubtedly so) that the oftener they be inuited to amend, and conuert not, the moze horrible shall their condemnation be.

And pondered them in her heart) The second thing that Marie did, they being kept in the chest of her heart, it is saide mozeouer, that she pondered them, that is, called them often to her remembrance, and was alwaies musing of them. Wherein wee may beholde an example

Obedience to the Gospell.

example of most Christian modestie,
that hauing so great matters revealed
vnto her, she maketh no bragge of it, as
though she were to be honoured of all
men and admired for it, but is rather
carefull to make vse of it vnto her selfe.
By whose example is corrected that
proud spirite of worldlings, who, albeit
they neither knowe one point of religi-
on aright, nor yet can tell how to begin
the practise of a godlie life: yet notwith-
standing they wil oppose them selues,
both in knowledge against the learned-
est, and in godlinesse against the most
holie, whose helpe (in daide) Sathan
vseth to out face the true seruants of the
Lord with their bragges: and to the vt-
termost of their power, to bring them
into hatred and contempt. But Marie
was not of that minde, she was inspired
with that spirite which teacheth true hu-
militie, which instructeth the godlie to
be lowlie in their owne conceit, and
bumble in their owne imaginations, be-
cause it doth bring them to the sight of
their manifold sinnes, and the desert of
the

Ve may not
boast of know-
ledge or any
other vertue.

They bragge
most that
know least.

The godlier
that a man is,
the humbler
he will be.

The second Sermon of

2. Cor. 11. 30.

the same: wherby they are brought low
and taught to depend vpon the mere
mercie of God, to boast in nothing, but
their owne infirmities: to desire to
knowe nothing but Iesus Christ, and
him crucified.

Againe we are to obserue, that she
therefoze pondered them in her heart,
because she did not yet beholde what
would be the euent of these things: and
yet she would not neglect them. By
whose example we may learne a profit-
table lesson, to teach vs how to vse the
doctrine that we learne from the Lords
messengers. It may be, that at that
present time when we heare it, we can-
not tel how to haue the present vse of it,
as they that be certainly perswaded of
Gods fauour to them, haue not present
or so great neede of the comforts against
distrustfulnesse, they that be sufficiently
humbled, neede not greatly the seuer
reprehensions of the Law: yet notwith-
standing, when they heare the doctrine,
they are not straightway to thinke they
need not harken vnto it, but rather they
must

The right vse
of knowledge.

Obedience to the Gospel.

ponder it in their heart, and lay it by there as in a store house. We may learne this lesson by the example of a good householder, who finding any implement in his house, which he presently knoweth not how to bestow, will saie, I will keep it seauen yeares, and once in that time I shall haue vse of it: euen so it saith with Christians, they are to provide for warre in the time of peace: to arme them selues as wel where Sathan striketh not, as where he doth strike, and to be furnished with the complete armour of God, to be instructed with doctrine euerie waie, that wheresoener, or whensoever he shall assaile vs, his blowes may be warded, and kept backe with the sword of the spirit which is the word of God, for we are not worthy to be so much of Gods counsell, as to know with what trial he wil search vs next, & therefore we are to be euerie way provided, persecution, sicknesse, pouertie, and all other Crosse that we are subiect vnto, come very sodenly, when it wil be too late, then to take armour of proofe for our comfort

We must bestow vs in knowledge.

The second Sermon of 10

Math 25. 10.

comfort, if we lacke it then, we had as good lacke it still, and therefore lette vs prouide for it afozehand, that we neuer be found as the foolish Virgins without oile in our lamps.

And the sheepeherds returned glorifying and praising God, for all that they had heard and seene, as it was spoken vnto them) This is the third and last effect that is sette downe vnto vs to be wrought in the sheepeheards, by the knowledge of the birth of Christ: which containeth in it thre things: first, their returning: second, their glorifying, and praying of God: third, the cause wherefore, for al that they had heard and seen as it was shewed vnto them.

The sheepeheards returned) The first thing (as you see) is, that when they had seene, and were fully instructed in the birth of Iesus Christ they returned back againe from Bethlem vnto the place of their former abode, to exercise the duties of their ordinary vocation: wherein we may beholde in what place they set the woakes of their calling, even in the last

Obedience to the Gospell.

last place of al: for we see, that they first went in haste to the place where Christ was to be scene, then published it abroad to the world, and lastly, when they had done, they returned: we are to learne then (if we mean to profit by their example) to preferre the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the spreading abroad of his will, whereby he may be glorified before our owne matters of this world. For the first end of our creation is Gods glorie, and the second, our owne saluation, wherevnto in their severall places the busineses of this world must attend and give place, that is, that no things that be in, or vpon this earth, should be anie hinderances vnto vs for the setting forth of Gods glorie, and the seeking of our owne saluation, a lesson that is sooner taught than it is learned, and sooner spoken than practised: for howe fewe are there to be found in this world that doe keepe their worldlie desires so farre vnder, that they be wholly eaten vpp with the glorie of the Lorde? And howe manie are there euerie where that

The world ought to give place to religion.

Prou. 16. 4.

The second Sermon of

that do place this world in equall degree
with religion, yea and suffer it (being
of it self an vnderling, the things where
of God hath put vnder mans feet) to be
so saucie as to be check-mate with reli-
gion, yea and to checke (often times)
and to controll the very motions of the
spirit of God? But of all other, how easie
a thing is it to find euery where those
persons that do entertaine this present
world as a Quene, giuing vnto him the
whole rule and gouernement of their
hearts and minds, and turning religion
cleane out at the doores, do bid her fare
well, and set her to begging. Where-
vppon, she hauing so long offered herselfe
vnto this land, and finding so base inter-
tainment, shee is at this present almost
banished out of it, so that a man may
seeke whole houses, and not finde her,
townes and countries, and yet her face
is founde scarce to appeare. But howe-
soeuer the worlde despiseth her (being
that wisdom of God spoken of by Sa-
lomon, that crieth in the streets) we are
to preferre her before golde and silver,
before

Obedience to the Gospell.

before delights and pleasures, we are to **Prou. 1. 20.**
make it the finall end of all our deuises,
and counsels, to procure him vnto vs,
who onely teacheth the seruice of God,
and openeth the way to sternall life.
And not to doe, as is the manner of ma-
ny, who, when they be exhorted to make
religion their chiefest care, and not to
wed them selues thus to the world, wil
answere (their owne consciences telling
them that it should be so) indeed I confesse
I am too blame to be so negligent, but
to say the truth, I could not as yet do as
I would, for I haue had so many mat-
ters in hand as I could possibly turne
my selfe vnto, which are indifferent wel
ouercome now: so that if I had once done
with one or two businesses moe, or, if
I had such and such a commoditie that
I am about, then you shall see me be at
an other day. Thus doe these persons
think that they do answer wisely, & yet
euen in such speeches they declare, that
when they haue serued the worlde, then
wil they serue God: (for they shal neuer
want such excuses so long as they liue)

The excuses of
worldlings
why they be
not religious.

If

when

The second Sermon of

When they haue nothing else to doe, they will be religious: in effect, when sinne forsaketh them, then will they forsake it: But God looketh for the first fruites for the pziue of all our labours, he will be serued befoze and aboue al other thinges: and therefore let vs not thinke to deale with him so: let vs not deceiue (or flatter our selues) thus: but let vs folowe the example of David, dedicate al that is within vs, to the praise of his holie name, and that from our youth upward, so shall we be sure of the blessing of God in this life, and in the world to come.

Psalme. 103.

Let vs yet obserue further the doings of these sheepeherds, who (though they were verie zealous and forward) yet you see, that in his due place they had also a dutifull care of their calling, not being so farre carried awaie from their sheepe, that they utterly forgotte them: but it is reported of them here, (and allowed by the spirite of God) that they returned, to wit, to their charge againe: by whose example wee do learne
this

Obedience to the Gospell.

this lesson, that religion (even in the perfection thereof) doeth not abolish the ordinarie calling of this world, nor exempt any man from taking some lawfull waie or other for the maintenance of him selfe and his familie. For God hauing placed man in this world, and adorned it with the wonderful riches of his creatures, and made them all for the vse of man, permitteth vnto him (receiving them as from him with thankfulness, and vsing them for his necessitie, and comfort) the free vse and benefite of this world, and al the things contained in the same: yea rather religion is so far from hindering or exempting a man from his calling, that it is the onelie direction for man, both to chuse vnto himselfe such a calling as is lawfull: and also (hauing admitted himselfe therevnto) to employ him selfe in the same aright, and to vse it lawfully: the scripture is plentifull for the p^{ro}ofe of this point. Let vs consider of certaine places for the warrant of this doctrine. But we beseech you (brethren) that ye increase

1 Theſ. 4. 10, 11

The second Sermon of

2. Theſ. 3. 10. 11
12, &c.

Luke 3. 10, &c.

1. Cor. 7. 31.

Four ſorts of
people that
abuse this
world.

The firſt ſort
of people.

more and more, and that ye ſtudie to be
quiet, and to medle with your owne bu-
ſineſſe, and to worke with your owne
hands as we commaunded you, and in
an other place: This we warned you of,
that if there were anie that would not
worke, that he ſhould not eate, for we
heare that there are ſome which walke
among you inordinately, and worke
not at al, but are buſſe bodies: therefore
them that are ſuch, we commaund and
erhort by our Lorde Jeſus Chriſt, that
they worke with quietneſſe, and eate
their owne breade. John the Baptiſt
teaching the people the right fruites of
repentance, counſelled no man to leaue
his calling, but rather taught him the
right uſe of the ſame. Saint Paul like-
wiſe telleth vs, that we may uſe this
world, yet it muſt be as though we uſ-
ed it not, that is, not to fix our mind vpon
it, but eſteem of it as a neceſſary thing
in this preſent pilgrimage, ſo that the do-
ctrine being moſt euident, it teacheth vs
to condemne the doings of foure ſeueral
ſortes of people: firſt of them that vnder
the

Obedience to the Gospell.

the pretence & shew of religion, will live
an idle life, being carelesse both for them
selues & their families, alleadging this :
God will provide, & in the meane while
they despise the means whereby he pro-
uideth, lining a careles & idle life, yea are
burthenous (often) to their brethren, and
think, that because they professe religion,
others ought to support thē, but they are
to know, y (if they be not within the num-
ber of lame & impotent persons, who can
not provide for themselves) The Apo-
stle enioineth to them, to eate their own
bread with quietnes. And if they do pro-
vide for themselves, & are able (through
their smal charge) to do it in smal time, &
so loiter over the rest, they are yet further
to learn, that they must also labour that
they may giue to him that needs, to haue
such a care over their poorer brethren, that
all the help that they can possibly afforde,
is to be employed to the benefite of the
saints that are on the earth, & this is not
only to be looked to generally in thē that
haue y government of themselves in these
things, but also to be diligētly considered

Ephes. 4. 28.

Psal. 116. 1.

The second Sermon of

of by seruants that professe religion: for
it is a common complaint (the trueth
whereof I referre vnto euerie mannes
conscience) that if once they become re-
ligious, they ware moze carelesse in
their Masters businesse, which if they
do, it is a grievous sinne in them, for re-
ligion teacheth them no such matter,
neither giueth them anie such leave,
but rather cleane contrarie, for Saint
Paul enioineth vnto seruants, that they
should be obedient vnto them that are
their Masters according to the flesh in
all things, not with eie seruice as men
pleasers, but in singlenesse of heart ser-
ring God: and bringeth a reason (in an
other place) to perswade them therevnto:
to wit, that whatsoeuer good thing
any man doth, that same shall he receiue
of the Lord, whether he be bond or free,
and saith further in an other place, that
else they make the name of God and his
doctrine euill spoken of, and therefore, if
anie shall by colour of religion, ware
carelesse in his Masters affaires, lette
both him selfe and others knowe, that he

Coll. 3. 22.

Ephes. 6 8.

1. Tim. 6. 1.

Obedience to the Gospell.

is not religious indeede, but abuseth the name of religion, to couer his owne sinnes. For this is most true, that religion is the onelie thing that maketh seruantes haue a conscience to looke to their Maisters gaires, and therfore they that would haue profitable seruants let them not onelie be carefull to retaine such as they know to feare God, but also that they instruct them dailie in the feare of the Lord, teaching them to do euerie thing by knowledge out of the word and conscience of obedience vnto God. The second sort of people that by this doctrine are iustly reprobued, be the Anabaptists, and their Cousin germanes the family of Loue, (of Lust I may terme them better) who (mistaking that place of Scripture in the Actes of the Apostles where it is said, that they that were conuerted vnto Christ, had all things common) do holde, that no man hath anie proper tie in any thing that he possesseth, but that euerie brother hath as lawfull interest in it, and may vse it when he will, as the partie him selfe, and though the

Gen. 18. 19.

Psal. 101. 6.

The second
sort of people.

Acts 2. 44.

The second Sermon of

wozds of the text at the first blush seeme
to import so much: yet being duely con-
sidered they containe no such matter,
for the verse following doth shewe the
meaning of the former where it is
saide, that they sold their possessions,
and parted to euerie one as they had
need, that is, they had such a zeale and
loue vnto the brethren, that they did
relaue and helpe them. But if it should
be so taken, it were manifest contra-
rie to other places of the Scriptures
(which were great blasphemie to think
that any parte of Gods woꝛde shoulde
be contrarie to an other) for trueth is
one, and alwaies like it selfe, and
nothing commeth from God, but it is
all truth, and nothing but truth. Nowe
in the Scriptures we reade, that God
hath set downe lawes to gouerne men
buying and selling, that euery one shold
deale iustly therein, and that none shold
defraud an other by false waights, or
measure, or counterfaiſte wares, which
were a needelesse doctrine, if men had no
propertie in things, for then why should
they

Obedience to the Gospell.

they sell? Or what needed the other to buy? Besides that, the Scripture is plentiful in this, to exhort rich men vnto liberalitie and pitie in relieuing their needie brethren, and neuer enioyneth vnto anie, to accompt nothing his owne. Againe we reade of manie godlie men that were rich, and had great possession, as Abraham, Job, Salomon, Zacheus, Ioseph of Arimathea, yea, and after the time of those conuerted by pitie as Cornelius, Simon the Tanner, and Caius, who is saide to be the hoste of the whole Church. Lastly, (which is the most inuincible place of all) God hath commaunded that we shoulde not steale, which commaundement is neuer broken, if no man possesseth of his owne, or if one mans goodes were common to an other man, therefore let vs embrace this as an vndoubted truth, that God hath giuen vnto euerie man a proprietie in that which he lawfully possesseth: onelie let him know this, that he is to haue care that he be liberall to his power, vnto those that neede, or else he is

Rom. 6. 23.

The second Sermon of

is no feeling member of Iesus Christ.

The third sort
of people.

The third sort is that rout of friers
and Monkes, who pretending the more
opportunitye to serue God, abandoned
themselves from all callings both of the
Church and common wealth to the ende
that they might liue an idle and loyter-
ring life, who through their hypocrisie
robbed the people to enrich themselves,
and their celles, and being careless
of euery good exercise, whereas by the
Apostles rule (afore alleadged) they
should not haue eaten yet notwithstanding
they were (for the most) so stall-
fed, and were so fatte Abbey lubbers,
(that though they had been willing) they
were vnfit, and not able to performe a-
nie good thing: these be they that would
denoure (not onelie widows houses, but
euen whole Lordships, yea, and the fat
of whole countries, vnder the pretence
of deuotion, and long superstitious pray-
ers, and yet notwithstanding the veriest
Caterpillers that euer were, whereby
we may behold (discerning the tree by
the fruit) what greedy vermine Poperie
doth

Obedience to the Gospell.

doth hatch and bring forth, to the greates
impouerishing of whole comon welths,
and kingdomes. Wee are not (Gods
name be praised for it) much troubled
with such people in these our daies, yet
we are maruelously pestered with a kind
of men that be much like them in quali-
ties, and those be they that when they
could not thriue in their trades, or could
not liue idly in them (being good for no-
thing, though they can neither teach o-
thers, nor yet haue learned what reli-
gion is themselves) haue (and do daillie)
thrust them selues into the Ministerie,
being of qualities much like vnto Iero-
boams Priests, wherevpon ariseth this
enormity, of all other, most to be lamen-
ted, that poore people (notwithstanding
thys long libertie of the Gospell) re-
mayne stil as ignozant as they were in
the time of Poperie, and are now more
prophane in life, and godlesse in conuer-
sation than ever they were, because they
see these people that should leade them,
who haue onelie chaunged their coats,
liue so wickedly, that they neyther care
for

The second Sermon of

for religion nor yet ciuill honestie, who in truth (I speake that I knowe by experience) are the greatest foes that the true Ministers of Gods woꝛde haue, peruertering pꝛiuately that whiche they teach publiquely: the Loꝛde putte it in the hearts of gouernours to see it redressed.

The fourth
sort of people.

The fourth, and the last sort of people, is, the graꝛdie couetous woꝛldlings, who (respecting onely their own gaine) haue no regard what course they take, be it lawfal or vnlawfal, so that they may haue great aduantage by it, which people generally be such, as seeke either to feede the beines and itching desires of fantastical heads with gay gorgeous and new deuises, whose gaine (thꝛough the follie and fickle headed alteration of vs Englishmen) is great: but if they had truely learned this doctrine, that religion entoineth vnto euerie man a lawfull calling, and such a one, whereby he may be a profitable mēber among men, they would with those godly Ephesians, not onelie leaue those curious Arts, but
euen

Acts 19. 19.

Obedience to the Gospel.

men burne the booke whereby such fol-
lie is learned. Contrariwise, where
religion is taught, and the fruit not she-
wed, such persons prove the sorest eni-
mies, and most professed foes unto reli-
gion. For, what a stirre did Demetrius Acts 19.24.
make in Ephesus at the preaching of
Paule: and al to defend his owne trade
of vngodlie gaine, by making still tem-
ples of shynesse for Diana, much like vn-
to the boxes wherein the Papists are
wont to putte their little God almighty
(as they terme him) so that it behou-
neth euery one that is careful to please
God, and benefite by religion, to la-
bour to be certified out of the worde of
God, of the lawefulnesse of his calling,
to the end, that he may embrace the Gos-
pell with a good conscience. But parti-
cularly those be especially by this doc-
trine severely to be reprehended, that
either respecting the greatest gaine, or
idlest life, doe conuert all that they
haue into money, and putte it out
vnto vsurie, of all other synnes the
verie Canker of the common wealth
at

The second Sermon of

at this day, and a thing so generally b.
sed, euen of them that would be counted
religious, as if it were as lawfull, as to
reape the fruites of the earth: againste
which offence I meane not to make any
great inuective at this present, because
the common place is long, and handled
most learnedly of others, onely thus
much wil I say of it, that it is flatly
forbidden by al law, both Statute law,
Ciuil law, and Canon law, and as for
the law of God (whose only authoritie I
fight withal against it) it is as plaine to
be proued, that it is a horrible sinne to
take any gaine, in any commoditie for
the loue of money, as that Iesus Christ
our saviour died vpon the Crosse for the
guilt of our sinnes, and therefore let
no man flatter himself with this or that
qualification, as why may I not? &c.
For no excuse may serue against Gods
owne word, no exceptions may be made
against it, for God saith flatly, Thou
maist not giue out thy money vpon vsu-
rie, nor take any interest: for if thou do-
est, there is no place for thee in the La-
ber

See Doctour
Wilson vpon
Vsurie, Bishop
Jewel vpon the
1. Thess. &c.

Ezech. 18. 13.
Psal. 15 5.

Obedience to the Gospell.

bernacle of God, neyther shalt thou rest
vpon his holie hill, and therfore neuer
excuse the matter for lucres sake. Damm
not thine owne soule for money: sel not
thy birth-right for a messe of pottage: for
wel maist thou by pretences shift out the
matter from the punishment of man, but
al is no better than fig-leaves to couer
thy nakednesse when God shall call thee
to accompt.

Againe, though these Sheepeheards
shewed themselves maruelous forward,
yet you see, that after they had found that
they did desire, they had their flockes to
returne to againe, wherein we may be-
hold the great loue of God vnto them,
that in those dangerous times their
flockes were preserved vnto them, wher-
by wee may learne this generall lesson,
that religion rightly vsed is no enemy to
lawful gaine: neither of it selfe doeth it
bring vnto man any hindzaunce: a doc-
trine that will hardly sincke into the
heads of a number, for they perswade
themselves, that nothing is more eni-
my to wooldy gaine than religion,
whom

Religion no e-
nemie to law-
full gaine.

The second Sermon of

whom I do briefly answere thus, that if they meane euerie kinde of gaine which way soeuer it be come by, withoat regard whether it be had by right or wrong, they say truly, that religion is the onely foe (next vnder God) that it hath: and as for such, it is but lost labour to tell them of anie religion, for the feare of God is not befoze their eyes: but if they meane that gaine which may lawfully be gotten with the warrant of Gods woꝛde, no point of religion can be against it, for the Loꝛde (as you haue heard) enioineth such a course to gaine vnto euerie one of his childꝛen: whereby it is pꝛoued lawfull, and for the fruit of their labour the Loꝛd hath promised that he shal reape it. First seeke the kingdome of God and his righteousnesse, and al these things shalbe ministred vnto you. Where you see, that God hath promised his blessing even in this life to them that be truly religious. But you wil say to me, how is that true? For we see in experience the godlie man commeth vnto many extremities. I answere, that religion was neuer the cause of

Math. 6.33.

Obedience to the Gospell.

of any of them: for you must understand,
that God neuer punisheth, but either to
correct, to trie, or else to giue example:
one whereof is the cause of euerie afflic-
tion, and therfore let no man say, if I
had not bene a Gospeller, this had not
befallen vnto me, or religion is the cause
of this miserie. For if he will truly enter
into the consideration of the thing by the
word of God, he shal find, that God ne-
uer afflicteth any man because he is reli-
gious, contrariwise, wee reade and see
daily by our owne experience, that God
seuerely plagueth the lacke or contempt
of religion enen in worldly matters, for
you shal see some that are so vigilant and
careful about their earthly commodities,
that they can not afford themselves any
time to refresh their weary bodies with
 sleepe and food, nor the Lord anie part of
his Sabaoths to be duly honored in, that
a man woulde thinke they can not chuse
but proue marueilous rich, and yet not,
withstanding they are neuer the nearer:
why? surely, because they not hauing
that care of gods seruice that they shold,

The second Sermon of

no: that regard to depend vpon his blessing that God requireth, but thinke to bring greate matters to passe by their owne industrie, and (as it were) in despite of the Lord: he of his iust iudgement laieth such a curse vpon their labours, that they profite nothing at all: whereby such persons may haue iust occasion to learne, that man liueth not by bread onely: For the Lord can break the staffe of bread, that is, the strength thereof, that it shall not nourish: and can frustrate the hope of the labourer, that he shall not reape the fruit of his owne works. And therefore we are first to seeke his glorie, and then in all our trauailes to acknowledge them to be vnfit to yeelde vs any comfort without his gracious blessing be vpon the same.

Glorifying and praising God] The second point of this last branch, is, that they did in and after their returne glorifie and praise the Lord. Wherein they shewed them selues not to be forgetfull or vnthankfull of Gods mercie toward them, by whose example we may learne
what

Matth. 4. 4.

Leuit. 26. 26.

Obedience to the Gospell.

What duetie we owe vnto the Lorde our
God in respect of his manifold blessings;
that we must glozifie his holy name con-
tinually for them: which lesson we had
verie much neede to obserue and folowe:
for it is the course of the worlde now a-
daies to be thankfull vnto God, as they
are to men, with a worde and away,
neuer remembzing him any moze: But
we are to know, that God will not be
so serued: he requireth continuall and
heartie thanks at our handes: which, if
we would rightly consider, we shoulde
not generally be so secure as we be. For
time (which should teach vs experience
of the loue of God towarde vs, and so
make vs moze zealous) doeth cleane
weare out of our mindes the remem-
brance of former benefites receiued, so
that you shall see them that by special fa-
uor that they haue found at Gods hands,
are (for a season) exceeding hote and for-
ward in religion: But it is with them
accozding to the common Proverb, some
hote, some colde, for they become after-
ward so faint and colde in their course be-

The second Sermon of

gunne, that it may be truly said of them, as it was of the Church Ephesus, that haue fallen from their first loue. I wold to God, that I had not iuste cause to make this complaint in this place, for surely (to speake generally) I haue sene more zeale, more loue and care vnto religion than now I can beholde: the world doth so carie men awaie, and they be so crammed with the word, that now they be ready to surfet of it: they be cloied with it, & seeme to loath it, as the Israelites did that heauely Manna: but assure your selues, that if the plentie thereof do make you esteeme it lesse precious, God will send you that darth & famine that he threatneth by the Prophet, that ye shall seeke it from sea to sea, and not finde it.

Reuel. 3. 4.

Moreouer, in that these are saide to haue this wrought in them by the vnderstanding of the thing, that they glozified and praised God, we learne, that where religion is truly imbraced, where the word of God taketh root & true holde, it wil bring forth the fruit conuenient & agreeable to the same: for of it selfe it is
a most

Amos 8. 11.

Obedience to the Gospell.

a most lively seede, & is mightie in operation: so when it meeteth with a heart that is pliant therevnto, it is verie forcible, and therefore let no man flatter & deceiue himself by perswading his own hart, that he is truly religious, when in the meane while he is cold and carelesse in the fruits of it: for Gods spirit accompanieth religion, which is a spirite of heate and zeale making mans heart (as it were) to melt at those things y^e are for the glorie of God, & encrease of true religion in the harts of Gods people, which ought to be farre more glittering in vs, than it was in the sheepeheards, for wee haue greater cause: the whole passion, death, & glorificatiō of Christ is manifested vnto vs, so that we lacke nothing to perfect our knowlege (if we will receiue it) & therefore there must be no lingering in vs, to shew forth al y^e praises of god in most perfectiō, which we do litle regard.

For al that they had heard and seene, as it was spoken vnto them) The third and last point of all, which is the cause that moued them to reioice and

By praise

The second Sermon of

praise the Lord even the things that they
had heard and seen, by whom we must
learne the last (but not the least duetie)
that we owe vnto God, even continual-
ly to recount, ponder, and consider the
manifold blessings that the Lord doeth
multiplie vpon vs daily by the iust consi-
deration whereof we cannot chuse, but
burst out into admiration of his won-
derfull loue and mercie towards vs mi-
serable and wretched sinners, and so to
deuise with our selues howe wee may
shewe our selues effectually thankfull:
so did the Prophet Dauid. What shal I
render vnto the Lord (saith he) for al his
benefites towards me? I wil receiue the
cup of saluation, and call vpon the name
of the Lord, I will pay my vowes vn-
to the Lord, even now, in the presence of
all his Saints. Whose good and godlie
example if we will reape benefite by, we
must doe as he did, worship him truely
according to his word, and perfourme
that duetie in obedience to his comman-
dements, that he requireth at our hands
As for the manner of his praise wee may
also

Psalm, 12. 12.

Obedience to the Gospell.

also learne it by these sheepeheards, that they did it as it was tolde them, that is, according as God had commaunded: so must we do, praise his holie name, (as he requireth at our hands) and doe it as himselfe hath commaunded in his word, and so shall it be acceptable in his sight: Let vs therefore (to conclude) seeing we be hedged in on euerie side with y great blessings of God, seeing that by him wee liue and moue, and haue our being, seeing he sheweth himselfe most kinde and liberall, both in things that concerne the soule and the bodie: let vs (I say) studie and indenuour by all possible meanes, that so long as we abide in this transitorie world, we may shew forth the glorie of his name according to his will: then shall we be sure of his fauour vnto vs in this life, and of eternall ioies in the world to come, by the merites and bloodshedding of Iesus Christ our saviour: to whome with the father and the holie ghost, be all glorie and honour, now and for euer. Amen.

Let vs pray,



Eternall God in
Iesus Christ our
most louing and
mercifull Father,
vvee render vnto thy Maiestie
most humble and hartie thanks
for all thy blessings and mani-
fold benefites bestowved vpon
vs, namely, for those inestima-
ble graces of our election, crea-
tion, vocation, iustification, san-
ctification, and redemption: &
for this great treasure of thy ho-
lie vvord, vvherein vve acknowv-
ledge thy great loue tovvardes
vs vile vvretches and miserable
sinners. And for as much (O
Lord) as thou hast taught vs at
this

A Praier.

this present, howe forcible and
effectuall thy vvorde vvas vnto
the Sheepeherdes, vworking in
them such an ardent and burn-
ing loue to see thy sonne Iesus
Christ, vwhen he vvas manife-
sted in the flesh, such forvvard-
nesse and haste to satisfie that
godlie desire vvhich thy holie
spirit had vvrought in them, &
finding that vvhich they soght
for, vv ere carefull to publish it
abroade, that others might be
partakers of that comfort, and
after returned vnto their voca-
tion againe, glorifying thy ho-
lie name, vvith all obedience vn-
to thy blessed vvorde. And
moreouer, bicause vve haue ler-
ned from thee, that the multi-
tude

A Praier.

tude that heard of it, yet shewed not anie zeale or care to see the truth of it themselves, but suffered the cogitation therof to vanish out of their mindes, without any profit vnto themselves: but contrariwise, thy seruauent Marie kept euerie thing in remembrance, being carefull by continual pondering thereof in her heart, to make vse of it for her comfort and further instruction. VVe confesse (good father) that the example of these parties doth teach vs both the duetie that we owe vnto thee, the obedience that thy worde requireth at our hands, and the zeale which wee shoulde expresse in our liues, to set forth thy

A Praier.

thy glory, and also howv to shun
that carelesse course vy which the
greatest number doth followe;
but (O Lord) vve acknowlege
against our selues, that vvee are
not able to thinke a good
thought, much lesse to yeelde
that obedience to thy vvoide
that thou requirrest, nor to make
anie fruit of it vnto the comfort
of our soules, vnlesse thou of
thy mercie vvorke it in vs: vvee
therefore most humbly beseech
thee mercifull father, to graunt
vs thy grace, that euerie one of
vs may be so truely persvaded
of the trueth of this doctrine,
nowe deliuered vnto vs, that
thy holie spirite may imprint it
in our hearts, and vve may feele
the

A Praier.

the comfort of it in our soules
and consciences , and labour
diligently to bring foorth the
fruit of it in our liues and con-
uersations : most gracious Fa-
ther , vve pray thee subdue our
affections and rule our desire
by the gouernmēt of thy grace
and holie spirite that the entice-
ments of sinne doe not pull vs
avvay from that seruice that vve
ovve vnto thee, that vvee neuer
faint or vvaxe vvearie in the
course of godlinesse , that our
zeale be neuer quenched by a-
nie allurements of Sathan , but
that vvee may daily grovve and
encrease in all the Vertues of
Christianitie to the glorie of
thy blessed name and consolations

A Praier.

tions of our ovvne consciences, through Iesus Christ our
Lord : to vvhom vwith thee
and the holie Ghost, be
all praise, novve
and euer,
Amen.

FINIS.

